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BALDOCK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT
of the
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for the year
1953

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

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BALDOCK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

To the Chairman and members of the Council

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Lewis and Gentlemen,

By direction of Ministry of Health circular 1/54 I submit a report on the health and sanitary conditions of your district for the year 1953.

The local vital statistics continue favourable, the death rate for the year (7.5) being again exceptionally low and reflecting a markedly younger-than-average local age distribution. Live births still number just over twice the total deaths. From the high local proportion of young families your particularly pressing problems of housing and overcrowding from subtenancy continue.

There was again a marked absence from the district of serious infectious disease during the year.

I would acknowledge having received during the year every consideration and help from your Council and its officers.

I am, Mrs. Lewis and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

V.R.WALKER

District Medical Officer of Health.

May, 1954.

SECTION A LOCAL STATISTICS.

Area of District	542 acres.
Population - Registrar General's Estimate for mid-1953	6,576
Number of separately rated heriditaments at 31st December, 1953.	1,875
Number of separate dwellings (included in above figure) at 31st December, 1953. ...	1,592
Rateable Value..	£37,000
Sum Represented by a Penny Rate	£137.18.8d.

Extracts from Vital Statistics for the Year 1953

LIVE BIRTHS:

	Totals	Male	Female	BALDOCK URBAN DISTRICT	Comparable rate for England and Wales
Legitimate	97	55	42		
Illegitimate	4	1	3		
	101	56	45		
Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population...				15.4	15.5

STILLBIRTHS:

Legitimate	1	1	-		
Illegitimate	-	-	-		
	1	1	-		
Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births				9.8	22.4

DEATHS:	49	30	19		
Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population...				7.5	11.4

DEATH RATES OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE:

All infants per 1,000 live births...	19.8	26.8
Rate for legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate births	20.6	
Rate for illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate births	0.0	

Actual number of such deaths (a)	under 4 weeks	and (b) totals under 1 year.
Legitimate	1	2
Illegitimate	-	-
	1	2

Deaths from Puerperal Cause..	-
Deaths from Cancer (all sites)	6
Deaths from Measles...	-
Deaths from Whooping Cough...	1
Deaths from other infective and parasitic diseases	-

Comment on vital statistics for the Year

The estimated mid-year population again shows an increase this time of 272.

The local birthrate (15.4) this year approximates to the national average, though the exceptionally low death rate (7.5) indicates a younger-than-average local age distribution.

The stillbirth rate and the infant deathrate are both seen to continue favourable.

The chief causes of death were: Heart and Other Circulatory Diseases 17: Cancer (all sites) 6: and Vascular Lesions of the Nervous System 4.

SECTION B GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES.

No important change occurred during the year.

SECTION C SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

1. Water Supply. All premises in the district are provided with a direct piped supply of water, which is treated and supplied in bulk to the Council's Undertaking by the First Garden City Ltd. The supply has been satisfactory both in quantity and quality, and results of chemical analyses and bacteriological examinations of samples have also been satisfactory.

2. Sewage Disposal. During the year work has continued on the construction of the Council's Disposal Plant to enable sewage from Baldock to be pumped to Letchworth for treatment at the Letchworth Council's new works upon which work is also proceeding.

   It is anticipated that by the end of May, 1954 Baldock sewage will be pumped to Letchworth and thereafter the old irrigation beds will fall into disuse. This will bring about a general improvement in the sanitary circumstances of the area and the disappearance of a nuisance which has been a trouble to large numbers of people for many years.

3. Rivers and Streams. Samples of water from the River Ivel were submitted regularly for chemical analysis, and the results showed that, although there was evidence of pollution, the water was capable of supporting fish life.

4. Caravan Site. There is one caravan site in the area for which consent was granted under the Town & Country Planning Act, 1947 and licensed under the Public Health Act, 1936. This site is within the curtilage of Bondor Ltd., adjacent to their sports field, and has provision for six trailer type caravans. There is on the site water closet accommodation and washing facilities for the occupants together with a piped water supply and facilities for the storage and collection of domestic refuse. The site is well maintained and the general circumstances satisfactory from the sanitary point of view.

5. Public Cleansing... A weekly collection of refuse is maintained, and the refuse is disposed of by tipping.

6. Sanitary Inspection of the Area (other than dwellinghouses and food premises).

(a)	Number of inspections carried out under Factories Act...	12
(b)	Number of inspections carried out under Petroleum Acts..	24
(c)	Number of inspections carried out in connection with drainage and sewage.. ...	97

(d) Number of inspections carried out in connection with water supply and sampling 25
(e) Miscellaneous inspections.... 57
(f) Number of nuisances investigated and dealt with 10
(g) Number of investigations regarding infectious diseases.. 6
(h) Rodent Control. During the year 164 separate premises were treated for infestations of rats and mice, involving 656 visits and inspections.
(i) Swimming Bath (Privately owned). During the summer months samples were taken regularly, and in all cases the results of bacteriological examinations were satisfactory and the amount of free chlorine at the outlet end was not less than 0.2 p.p.m.

SECTION D HOUSING

Council Housing Schemes.

During the year the Council continued with its progressive policy on post-war housing and the scheme of 50 flats was completed and a contract for 36 Gregory houses started.

Negotiations were commenced for the acquisition of Hopewell Road for a further 35 houses approximately, and at the Anchor Field Estate where there is room for about 160 dwellings. At the end of the year the Council owned 925 houses.

Inspection of Dwellinghouses during the Year.

(1) Number of dwellinghouses inspected (for housing defects under Public Health or Housing Act) ... 28
Number of inspections made for the purpose ... 49
(2) Number of dwellinghouses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation 1
(3) Number of dwellinghouses (exclusive of those referred to under (2) above) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation.. 13
(4) Number of dwellinghouses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices under Public Health or Housing Acts:-
(a) By owners ... ... -
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners... -
(5) Number of defective dwellinghouses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or its officers. 15
(6) Housing Act 1936 - Overcrowding.
(a) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year 8
Number of families dwelling therein ... 19
Number of persons dwelling therein. ... 81
(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year ... ... -
(c) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year 2
Number of persons concerned in such cases. 6
(d) Particulars of any cases in which dwellinghouses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority has taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding ... ... None

SECTION E INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

During the year 47 inspections of food premises (including shops and market stalls) were made and, where necessary, informal action was taken to secure compliance with the Council's Byelaws and the Food & Drugs Act, 1938.

There are no ice-cream manufacturers in the district. Samples of ice-cream from retailers were taken regularly and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for bacteriological examination (methylene blue test). Of those taken 95% fell into Grades 1 or 2 and one sample fell into Grade 4.

There is no slaughterhouse, food factory, or dairy (other than one dairy farm, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture) within the district.

The following foodstuffs were condemned as unfit for human consumption.

82lbs.	Imported Canned Ham.
106lbs.	Imported Canned Meat (other than Ham).
78lbs.	Irish Beef.
29lbs.	Tinned Fruit.

SECTION F PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

Total notifications of acute infectious diseases (after correction) were:

Measles	50
Whooping Cough	45
Scarlet Fever	3
Acute Pneumonia	2
Infective Jaundice	2

Measles showed a marked prevalence in the first quarter of the year and whooping cough in the fourth quarter, one infant death occuring from the latter disease.

The three notified cases of scarlet fever in the first quarter were all young children, without any spread in the Infant School.

Generally it may be remarked that during the year, apart from measles and whooping cough, there was no real incidence of serious infectious disease locally.

For yet another year no case of diphtheria was notified. Despite long continued absence of the disease from the district the offer of infant protection by immunisation continues to be accepted by a large majority of parents.

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Deaths during the year 1953.

Age Periods.	New Cases Respiratory M.	New Cases Respiratory F.	New Cases Non-Respiratory M.	New Cases Non-Respiratory F.	Deaths Respiratory M.	Deaths Respiratory F.	Deaths Non-Respiratory M.	Deaths Non-Respiratory F.
0 - 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 - 15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15 - 25	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25 - 35	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
35 - 45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
45 - 55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55 - 65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
and over	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deaths allocated by the Registrar-General after final transfers:					-	-	-	-

New notifications are seen to be low in number.

V.R.WALKER
Distric Medical Officer of Health.

May, 1954.

[illegible]